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Statement on EAST TIMOR

to the UN Committee of 24

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tapol The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign
111 Northwood Road Thornton Heath Surrey CR4 8HW

Statement on the question of East Timor
to the UN Committee of 24, August 1988
by
TAPOL, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

Chairperson and honorable members of the Decolonisation Committee,

As the representative of TAPOL, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, I am deeply indebted for the opportunity to present a submission on the tragedy of the people of East Timor whose country was brutally annexed by the Indonesian armed forces in 1975 and who still live under the heel of Indonesian colonialism. I want to use this opportunity to explain to this Committee more about the nature and specific features of the Indonesian rule in East Timor.

East Timor, a closed and isolated territory

East Timor remains one of the most inaccessible areas in the world today. Despite all kinds of statements from important military officials in Jakarta, there are no signs that East Timor will be more open in the near future. Recently Mario Carrascalao, the Indonesian-appointed governor of East Timor, announced that he had asked President Suharto to declare East Timor an open 'province', ending the present status according to which anyone entering or leaving the territory needs a 'clearance document' issued by the military authorities. Carrascalao made it quite clear that he was not asking for East Timor to be opened up to foreigners. [Suara Pembaruan 24 June, 1988] He was concerned only with the flow of movement between East Timor and Indonesia. Even so, some circles have speculated that talk about opening up East Timor "would neutralise critics in international forums". [Kompas, 21 June 1988] This relates to Indonesia's ambition to chair the Non-Aligned Movement.

Carrascalao's appeal has not only drawn attention to the fact that East Timor is a closed territory, even for Indonesians. It has focused attention on the grave economic situation in East Timor. Until now, Carrascalao has always justified the closed

status of East Timor on the grounds that the Timorese need protection against cut-throat competition from Indonesians coming in and stealing jobs from less qualified local people. Now he argues that the closed status has not prevented Indonesians 'with connections' from coming in. "They are snatching jobs from the Timorese. Business firms working on government projects bring all their own personnel, even stone-carriers." The governor spoke about a "crisis that will become unmanagable", about "economic stagnation", and even about "half the people still being illiterate or virtually without education". [Tempo, 2 July 1988]

If Carrascalao is to be believed. lifting the restrictions on access to East Timor would encourage bona fide businessmen to invest and create a more healthy economy. But it is not only the lack of openness that is the problem. Even more telling are Carrascalao's complaints about the lack of public supervision. "There needs to be a loosening of the presence of intelligence men (read: military intelligence) in supervision." [Suara Pembaruan 21 May 1988] Given the constraints on anyone speaking out, even someone like Carrasacalao who has just been appointed governor for a second term, it is apparent from Carrascalao's guarded remarks that he not only wants drastic measures to save the economy from stagnation; he also wants the military to get off the backs of the Timorese.

Unfortunately for the governor, his pleadings for a fairer deal for the Timorese have fallen on deaf ears. Although several generals responded positively, creating the impression of a consensus to open East Timor up, the most crucial and damning response came from General Murdani, architect of the invasion and now Minister of Defence. Pouring scorn on Carrascalao's complaints, he said that if Carracalao wanted the place opened up, the armed forces would not be responsible for the consequences. [Kompas 28 June 1988] In face of this thinly-veiled threat, Carrascalao was forced to admit that it was out of the question to think of opening up East Timor if the security forces "then abandoned us". [Tempo, 2 July 1988]

The development debacle

The Indonesian authorities have for many years boasted about the huge amount of money they have invested to develop East Timor's economy. As any East Timorese refugee will tell you, much of the cash has been been gobbled up by corruption. The East Timorese landscape is pock-marked with failed or half-finished projects, derelict and unused schools or health clinics without medicines or equipment. The most commonly-derided developmental flop is the indoor sportshall in Baucau, the roof of which caved in a week after it was completed. One project promised several years ago was a sugar factory in Los Palos along with a 50-km road and a harbour in Com to give the factory an outlet. Now, Governor Carrascalao has revealed that the factory was never built. although three billion rupiahs was spent to construct the harbour and army engineers built the road from Los Palos to Com. Carrascalao described this as "a waste of investment funds" [Tempo, 2 July 1988]. What he did not say was that the road and harbour have both been used for troop landings and military operations.

Recently a Jakarta daily announced that the level of unemployment in East Timor in fiscal 1986/87 was 65 per cent higher than in the previous year. Of those seeking work, less than 1 per cent found jobs. Alarming as the figures were, Carrascalao warned that the official figures seriously understate the problem, as administration in the more remote areas is far from adequate. Youngsters leaving school are unable to find jobs. The civil service is closed to them while jobs in the private sector are taken by outsiders from Sumba, Flores, Buton and even far-away Sulawesi. Few Timorese can make it these days, even in the field of petty trading.

The Indonesian administration in East Timor

Mr. Chairman, let me now elaborate on the structure of the Indonesian administration in East Timor. Unlike provincial structure elsewhere, East Timor is run like a garrison. One distinctive feature is its military structure, as it falls under a special military command called the Komando Operasi Keamanan

Timor Timur (Security Operational Command for East Timor) or Koopskam Timtim which is directly subordinate to the armed forces headquarters in Jakarta. This special command has top priority and possesses all the most advanced and best-equipped material and personnel. On this occasion I want to focus on how Indonesian adminstration in East Timor is specially designed to keep the daily life of every Timorese in the iron grip of military intelligence.

From top to bottom, from the provincial government down to the village, the so-called civilian administration is integrated into the military and police structure (see Appendix). For instance, the sub-districts (kecamatan) are governed by bodies known as the Tripida, or Tri Pimpinan Daerah (triple regional leadership). They are the local military (Koramil) commander, the subdistrict head or camat and the head of the local police. The camats are Timorese while the two others are Indonesian. The Tripida meets at least once a month. In addition, on the 17th day of every month, (this day is chosen to mark the 17th day of August, Indonesia's independence day), all village heads (kepala desa) are required to attend a Tripida meeting to hear government exhortations, such as the need to speak bahasa Indonesia , to spread indoctrination about the state doctrine Pancasila, to mobilise their villagers for elections, for national anniversaries and so on.

In addition to functioning in tandem with an army officer and a police officer, the Timorese camat is also watched over by a "pendamping", (the word literally means 'one who accompanies'). 'Pendamping' is the accepted and publicly-used term for an army intelligence controller who has two functions, to handle whatever administrative job he has been appointed to do, and to keep a close watch on the Timorese official for whom he is responsible. At the highest level, the 'pendamping' of Governor Carrascalao is the Sekwilda, the Sekretaris Wilayah Daerah or provincial secretary, usually a high-ranking officer who has previously served as an officer in the military command in East Timor. All Timorese functionaries holding positions as camat or bupati

(district head) must have a 'pendamping' who will also attend the monthly leadership meetings along with the person under his control. Hence, Tripida meetings are attended by the army officer, the police officer, the camat and his 'pendamping'. In this way, Timorese who hold leadership positions at any level are hemmed in and closely watched by Indonesian officers.

At the village level, the village head (kepala desa) is controlled by a Babinsa (Bintara Pembina Desa), the village guidance NCO office, and the Binpolda (Bintara Polisi Desa), the village policeman. While the latter has the task of keeping civil order, fighting crime etc, the Babinsa is first and foremost an intelligence officer whose primary task is to spy on the villagers. Our sources insist that all Babinsas are Kopassus officers, from the most notorious commando and intelligence unit in the Indonesian army. The use of Kopassus officers is most unusual; elsewhere, territorial soldiers are used for babinsa posts but in East Timor the territorial troops are not regarded as tough enough. Kopassus soldiers are thus a permanent feature of Indonesia's military occupation in East Timor. They are particularly feared by Timorese who refer to them as nanggalas or 'knife-wielding killers'. The Babinsa duties are to visit people frequently in their homes, to check up on whether anyone is in touch with the resistance forces, to check up on any political discussions that may take place, and so on.

The village heads, all of whom are Timorese, are constantly watched by the Babinsa and have to carry out the wishes of the Indonesian authorities. The village heads must:

*Constantly remind people to speak Indonesian.

*Issue Kartu Tanda Penduduk (KTP) or identity cards, with the approval of the Babinsa and more senior officials. Anyone not possessing a KTP is not able to get a job, to open a shop, to have a driving licence, to go to school. It must be carried at all times and must frequently be produced. Anyone who does not produce a KTP when asked is suspected of being from the resistance and will be reported to the local military command.

*Organise kerja bhakti. compulsory village duties like

street-cleaning, the decoration of the village for Indonesian national festivities and collecting money for these events.

*Check on the surat jalan or travel permit of any visitor coming to the village.

*Organise people to do jaga malam or nightwatch duties which are compulsory for all males.

*Undertake all aspects of village control like registering births, deaths, marriages etc; check on who owns dogs, poultry, cattle, horses etc.

*Endorse applications for all kinds of permits like travel permits and permits for private social events. All social gatherings such as wedding parties and birthday parties require special permits. An application to hold a wedding party, for instance, must be made at least one week beforehand. It goes first to the village head, then to sub-district and district level. The permit will be issued by the district military command (Kodim). The gathering, if permitted, may not go on past midnight and a Kodim officer will attend to keep watch.

As a result of this system of control, people are unable to move anywhere without the army knowing and watching. Hence, control is not simply the existence of numerous military posts along the roads but control over people's everyday lives. Even at night, people cannot rest peacefully, for fear that something may happen, that the army will pounce.

In Indonesian eyes, all East Timorese are suspect, everyone is a potential member of the resistance, active or passive. Control has become the all-pervading feature of daily life for the East Timorese. East Timor is run like a huge prison, with an ever-present climate of fear and the total absence of legal rights.

There are severe restrictions on the freedom to travel and to communicate. Even worse, these restrictions have been institutionalised. The clearest example is the surat jalan or travel permit. A surat jalan is required for anyone who travels,

even from one village to the neighbouring village. An application is made to the village head which must then be endorsed by the sub-district and the district military command. The Kodim is empowered to issue the travel document in the case of any journey within East Timor. For a journey out of East Timor, the application goes up to the provincial level and is issued by the Koopskam Timtim, the special military command for East Timor.

For each journey a new surat jalan must be obtained and each time, a lengthy questionaire must be completed which includes the following questions: Where were you during the civil war? Were you a member of any political party, and if so which? Which do you prefer, Indonesian or Portugese rule? Are any of your relatives in the mountains (with the resistance)? How should a Fretilin person who is captured be treated?

The need to have a surat jalan is particularly burdensome for people who take products to market. Even with the permit, they are repeatedly stopped along the road by soldiers at the many military posts, and required to pay uang rokok (money for cigarettes).

The means of communications are also severely restricted. Very few Timorese in Dili and virtually no Timorese elsewhere are allowed to have a telephone. A phone may only be installed with the approval of Koopskam. Even offices of village heads have no telephone. Hence, there is no way to convey news rapidly to anyone in the country. If there is a death in the family, the news must be sent via the local babinsa to his superiors through to the other district. The message is then conveyed down through the military command to the babinsa who passes it on to the family. Such are the lengths to which the Indonesians go to control the flow of information. Similarly with the postal service, censorship is so severe that anybody who sends a letter knows that it will be read by military intelligence. Letters from abroad are mostly intercepted and not handed over to the addressee. Hence, people do not risk writing openly about any events involving the security forces. which explains why reports about abuses in East Timor may take weeks or months to reach the

outside world.

The international community has repeatedly called for East Timor to be opened up to inspection by international organisations like Asia Watch, the Catholic Institute for International Relations, Amnesty International, the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group and the International League for Human Rights. But all efforts to monitor the human rights situation in East Timor have been rejected by the Indonesian Government. Indeed, the Indonesians have very much to hide from the outside world. But in these modern times it is not possible to enforce a total blackout anywhere in the world. Information is bound to trickle out, whether through the stories of East Timorese refugees, reports from the East Timorese resistance in the bush or in the cities, or even, through reports in the Indonesian press provided we are able to read between the lines. These reports continue to confirm that, thirteen years after the annexation, East Timor is still under tight military control, with no free movement, no freedom of assembly, no freedom above all from the stifling and intimidating presence of military personnel which has turned East Timor into a hell on earth for its long-suffering peace and freedom-loving people.

Mr. Chairman, we can all rejoice that, worldwide, the scourge of colonialism is in decline. Perhaps your Committee is one of the few UN bodies whose work-load is on the decrease. Unfortunately East Timor must remain on your agenda as one of two areas suffering under the colonial yoke of Indonesian militarism.

It is the task of the international community to demand the withdrawal of all Indonesian troops from East Timor and start the process of self-determination for the people of East Timor.

Thank you for your attention.

Scheme of the Indonesian administration in East Timor

RULING BODY		MILITARY TERRITORIAL COMMAND	POLICE TERRITORIAL COMMAND	ADMINISTRATION	PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
Provincial level					
MUSPIDA I, Musyawarah Pimpinan Daerah I; Regional Leadership Consultation at provincial level.	consists of	KOREM Commander, (Korem = Komando Resor Militer or Regional Military Command).	POLWI Chief, (Polwi = Polisi Wilayah, Regional Police.)	Governor & Sekwilda* (Sekwilda = Sekretaris Wilayah Daerah or Provincial Secretary).	Jaksa; Public Prosecutor
Kabupaten/District level East Timor is divided into 13 kabupatens					
MUSPIDA II, Musyawarah Pimpinan Daerah II; Regional Leadership Consultation at district level	consists of	KODIM Commander, (Kodim = Komando Distrik Militer or District Military Command)	POLRES Chief, (Polres = Polisi Resor, District Police)	Bupati & Sekwilda (Bupati = District Head, Sekwilda = District Secretary)	
Kecamatan/Subdistrict level In total 64 kecamatans					
TRIPIDA, Tri Pimpinan Daerah; Triple Regional Leadership at subdistrict level	consists of	KORAMIL Commander, (Komando Rayon Militer, Subdistrict Military Command	SEKSI POLISI Chief (Sie Polisi, Subdistrict Police Chief)	Camat & Pendamping** (Camat = Subdistrict Head)	
Desa/village level					
		BABINSA, Bintara Pembina Desa; Village Guidance NCO Officer	BINPOLDA, Bintara Polisi Desa; Village Police	Kepala Desa, Village Head	

APPENDIX

* Sekwilda = Regional or district secretary. In East Timor, the Sekwilda is invariably a military officer with the extra task of 'shadowing', ie controlling, the Timorese head.

** Pendamping = an Indonesian officer who 'accompanies' i.e. controls a Timorese official.